

Dulverton Rural District

Annual Report

1925

April 23rd, 1926

Gregory & Son, Printers. Tiverton

Dulverton Rural District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1925

BY

EDWARD A. B. POOLE, M.D., M.H., D.P.H.



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TO THE
CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
OF THE

DULVERTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I submit to you the Annual Report on the health of the Rural District of Dulverton for the year 1925.

This is the first of the five yearly survey reports, and as far as possible follows the requirements of Circular 648 of the Ministry of Health.

It includes the particulars usually asked for yearly and, in addition, references to the work of the preceding four years.

The order followed is that of the report for last year, and full particulars for separate parishes have not been given as to have done so would have been unsatisfactory.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD A. B. POOLE.

April 23rd, 1926.

Clerk to the Council :

E. G. C. CHAPMAN, Solicitor, Council Offices, Dulverton.
Telephone, Dulverton 10.

Medical Officer of Health :

EDWARD A. B. POOLE, Elmsmeade, Taunton.
Telephone, Taunton 473.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :

FRANK R. STOKER, A.M. Inst. M. & C.E., M.R.S.I.,
Surveyor's Office, Dulverton.

Measles and German Measles are not notifiable in the district. All tuberculosis cases are admitted to the County Council Sanatoria by the County Tuberculosis Medical Officers.

Application for admission should be made to Dr. Short, Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare.

All notifications of births should be sent to Dr. Savage, Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare.

It is an offence to sell milk from a cow suffering from tuberculosis of the udder.

It is an offence for any person suffering from a notifiable infectious disease, other than tuberculosis, to be exposed in a public place or in a public conveyance.

A complete list of the infectious diseases notifiable in the district is :—Small Pox, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Membranous Croup, Typhoid, Paratyphoid, Pneumonia, Cholera, Plague, Cerebro-spinal Fever, Acute Polio-myelitis, Encephalitis Lethargica, Typhus Fever, Relapsing Fever, Continued Fever, Trench Fever, Dysentery, Erysipelas, Ophthalmia Neonatorum, Tuberculosis (all forms), Malaria and Polio-encephalitis.

Notifications may be sent direct to the Medical Officer of Health, at Taunton, or to the Sanitary Inspector at Duiverton.

Notices of occasional slaughter should be sent to the Sanitary Inspector.

(1).—GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres), 78,159.

Population (1925), 4,641.

Number of inhabited houses, 1,170.

Number of families or separate occupiers, 1,097.

Rateable value, £47,144.

Sum represented by a penny rate, £130.

(2).—EXTRACTS OF VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR.

Births.—Legitimate, 85 (54 males, 31 females); illegitimate, 5 (4 males, 1 female). Birth Rate (R.G., 19.4.

Deaths, 50. Death Rate (R.G.), 10.7.

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of, Child Birth :—From Sepsis, nil; other causes, nil.

Deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 births, 44.4. Legitimate, 3; illegitimate, 1. Total 4.

Deaths from Measles (all ages), nil.

„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages), nil.

„ „ Diarrhœa (under two years of age), nil.

No unusual mortality occurred during the year requiring special comment.

Total Deaths Registered ...	...	...	...	...	44
“ Out ” Returns ...	...	...	...	...	—
“ In ” Returns ...	...	...	...	...	—
Total Net Deaths ...	...	...	...	...	50

The causes of Infant Deaths were :—Convulsions, 1. Premature Birth (including the illegitimate child), 2. The Registrar General gives three deaths of legitimate children but the local registrar's returns shew only two, and the (in returns) give nil.

The duration of life of those children who died, aged under 12 months, was :—

Under 1 week	...	...	...	...	3
1—4 weeks (inclusive)	...	...	...	...	nil
1—6 months	...	...	...	...	nil
6—12 months	...	...	...	...	nil
Total	...	...	...	...	3

Causes of Death (Civilians only) R.G.

	Males	Females	Total
7 Influenza	4	—	4
10 Respiratory Tuberculosis	—	1	1
12 Cancer	1	1	2
15 Cerebral Hæmorrhage	4	3	7
16 Heart Disease	8	3	11
17 Arterio-sclerosis	2	—	2
18 Bronchitis	2	5	7
19 Pneumonia (all forms)	2	—	2
28 Congenital Debility	2	—	2
30 Violent Deaths	1	—	1
31 Other defined causes	5	5	10
32 Causes ill-defined	—	1	1
Totals	31	19	50

There were no deaths from Enteric Fever, Small-pox, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, Diphtheria, Encephalitis-Lethargica or Meningococcic Meningitis.

The chief causes of death were Heart Disease, Bronchitis, Apoplexy, and Influenza. It will be remarked that there was only one death from all forms of Tuberculosis. Figures for England and Wales are :—

Birth Rate	...	18.3
Death Rate	...	12.2
Infant Death Rate	...	75

The causes of death for the past five years (civilians only) were :—

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
3 Measles	—	1	—	—	—
5 Whooping Cough	—	—	1	3	3
6 Diphtheria	—	—	1	—	—
7 Influenza	4	2	2	1	1
8 Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	1	—	—
10 Respiratory Tuberculosis ...	1	1	2	6	4
11 Other Tuberculosis	—	—	2	1	1
12 Cancer	2	6	7	7	3
14 Diabetes	—	1	1	—	—
15 Cerebral Hæmorrhage	7	1	2	2	2
16 Heart Disease	11	10	8	6	3
17 Arterio-sclerosis	2	2	3	—	1
18 Brouchitis	7	7	2	7	2
19 Pneumonia (all forms)	2	—	3	5	1
20 Other respiratory disease ...	—	1	—	—	—
21 Ulcer of stomach, etc.	—	1	—	—	—
23 Appendicitis, etc.	—	—	—	1	1
25 Nephritis	—	3	—	—	—
27 Accidents of parturition	—	1	—	—	—
28 Congenital debility	2	4	4	3	2
29 Suicide	—	1	1	—	11
30 Other violent deaths	1	2	5	1	1
31 Other defined causes	10	8	16	16	16
32 Other ill-defined causes	1	—	—	—	—
Totals	50	50	64	59	52

From the above table it will be seen that during the past five years there were no deaths from Enteric Fever, Small-pox, Scarlet Fever, Meningococcal Meningitis, Puerperal Sepsis or Diarrhœa in children aged under two years; and that apart from the above group of infectious diseases there were no deaths from Rheumatic Fever or Cirrhosis of the Liver.

The total deaths from Pulmonary Tuberculosis were 14 or under ~~two~~ per annum, and from other Tuberculosis four, or under one per annum. The most remarkable yearly figure is Suicide, 11 in 1921.

Some further figures for the past 5 years are :—

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Births	90	83	86	78	83
Birth Rate	19.4	18	19	17.3	18.3
Deaths	50	50	64	59	52
Death Rate	10.7	10.8	14.1	13.1	11.5
Infant Death Rate	44.4	72.3	116.2	76.9	36.1
Population (Reg. Gen.) ...	4641	4605	—	—	4515
Net gain births over deaths	40	33	22	19	31

The population (R.G.) for 1923 and 1922 I am unable to give. In the annual report for 1921 is an error of 10 in the “total deaths corrected for inward and outward transfer.” Instead of 42 this should have been 52; taking the list of causes of death as correct. Hence the Death Rate per 1,000 population should have been 11.5 instead of 9.3 as stated.

(3). NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Pneumonia (primary), 4 cases; 3 from Dulverton and 1 from Huish Champflower. Ages—males, 55, 53 and 9; female, 44.

There were two deaths from this disease.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum. One case from Winsford,, aged two days at the time of notification. This infant was under a doctor's care, and was followed up by a County Council Health Visitor, and, I am informed, made a complete recovery.

No special arrangements are in force with respect to this disease, and it is to be hoped that it will be conspicuous by its absence in the future; for in such a wide, thinly populated district efficient treatment is very difficult to get, except in Dulverton itself. As the disease is so serious, and such a common cause of blindness, I would recommend that, where the case is not within easy reach of a doctor, the patient be taken to hospital. The patient's eyes need thorough attention every two hours, and trusting to less may be courting disaster; further, it is only occasionally that one can find a nurse able to carry out the treatment

in the thorough manner that is imperative. Tuberculosis (pulmonary). One case, a female aged 31, from Exbridge. This patient should have been returned as a removal only, as she had already been notified in the Long Ashton district.

It is difficult to believe that no new case was diagnosed during the year. The tuberculosis register is not yet in proper order, and the last quarterly return to the County M.O.H. was :—Pulmonary, Males 14, Females 18, total 32; Non-Pulmonary, Males 8, Females 4, total 12. Grand total, 44.

A resumé of the infectious diseases notified during the past five years is :—

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921.	Tl.
Scarlet fever	—	3	2	1	—	6
Diphtheria	—	—	7	—	3	10
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	—	—	—	—	1
Pneumonia (Primary)	4	—	—	9	—	13
Tuberculosis (Pulmonary)	1	4	10	8	4	27
„ (Non-Pulmonary)	—	2	4	—	1	7
Removed to Hospital	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deaths—Diphtheria	—	—	1	—	—	1
„ Tuberculosis (Pul.)	1	1	2	6	4	14
„ „ (Non-Pul.) ...	—	—	2	1	1	4

(4) SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITALS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

There are “parish nurses” at Exford, Brompton Regis, Winsford, Dulverton, and Chipstable. No contribution is made towards these by the Council.

The school work is carried out by officials of the County Council, which Council also provides the tuberculosis visitors.

Hospitals.

(1). None in the district. Accommodation is available at Taunton, Exeter, and Minehead.

(2). Maternity, nil, other than the poor-law infirmary. The number of practising midwives is six.

(3). Children, nil.

(4). Fever. Arrangements have been made for the admission of cases of infectious disease to the Tiverton or Minehead Isolation Hospitals.

(5). Nil. Small-pox cases would be sent to the Somerset County Council Small-pox Hospital near Bridgwater.

Ambulance facilities, nil.

(6). LABORATORY WORK.

This is carried out, without charge, at the County Laboratory at Weston-super-Mare, including examinations of materials for the detection of Tubercle Bacilli, Diphtheria Bacilli, and Wassermann and Widal Tests.

In the past but few samples of water have been sent for bacteriological examination, as the train service is bad, and samples have to be dispatched before 9 a.m. to reach Weston in the afternoon. The provision of ice boxes is of little use, as a supply of ice is not available.

A supply of Anti-Diphtheritic Serum had been obtained by the Council which is kept at the local chemist's shop.

Bye-Laws, etc., relating to Public Health matters which have been adopted by the Council.

"With respect to New Buildings," June 25th, 1900 :— The provision of more up-to-date bye-laws re building, was under consideration by the Council at the end of the year, and bye-laws relating to SLAUGHTER-HOUSES were adopted early in 1926. These include Sec. 9b, which requires mechanical stunning before slaughter; or, in other words, the use of a humane killer.

(7). SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

The public water supply for the town of Dulverton is derived from springs on the hill just above the town on the Exmoor side.

Samples were reported as invariably good; but the supply is insufficient for the summer needs, and the provision of a supplementary supply would be costly.

Outside the town proper the supply is from wells.

In the annual reports for 1919 and 1920 is the following table of local water supplies with a note that all were satisfactory.

Brushford.—Wells and pumps.
Brompton Regis.—Reservoir and taps.
Exford.—Ditto.
Exmoor.—Wells and pumps.
Exton.—Pump and tap.
Hawkridge.—Springs.
Huish Champflower.—Reservoir and tap and pump.
Skilgate.—Pump.
Upton.—Taps.
Winsford.—Taps.
Withiel Florey.—Taps.
Withypool.—Storage.

There was a shortage in the supply for Dulverton in 1923, following which a heading was driven into the sandstone rock on the East side above the town, and an additional tank holding 900 gallons was provided.

Sewage.—In the report for 1920 a statement was made that a new sewage plant was to be provided, that a Ministry of Health enquiry had been held, that a loan of £6,106 was sanctioned, that 1,200 feet of new sewer pipes were to be laid, and that upwards of nine acres of land were to be acquired along the East side of the river Barle, below and about one half-mile from the centre of the town. This work was carried out in 1920 and 1921, and consists of a detritus tank and two septic tanks with a capacity for 24 hours flow. The system was designed by Messrs. Cotterill & Edson of Westminster.

The plant has worked quite satisfactorily, and has caused no trouble. Two men look after it, and also do the scavenging of the inner ward. Sewage from about 70 per cent. of the town houses is dealt with.

There had been no difficulty in getting rid of the sludge, which up to the present time has been taken by farmers, and the works have never been flooded.

There are no common lodging houses, cellar dwellings, houses let in lodgings, or offensive trades.

The sale of Food and Drugs Acts are administered by the police. The eight bakehouses were regularly inspected and informal notices to whitewash, etc., were given when required.

Under the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order regular inspections were also made. No special regulations have been made by the Council, and the new system of carding has not been adopted. Generally the condition of the cowsheds is as in other parts of the county, and the shops and dairies are kept clean and in good order. Number of producers 24, wholesalers nil, retailers 24.

Milk Supply.—Particulars asked for by the County M.O.H.

- (a) Number of producers on the register 24
- (b) Number of distributors on the register 24
 - (1) Distributors who are also producers 24
 - (2) Distributors only Nil
- (c) The register may be taken as reasonably complete, but no special steps have been taken in the matter.
- (d) No licences have been granted to distributors to sell pasteurised, graded, or certified milk.
- (e) No action has at present been taken as to tuberculous milk or tuberculous cattle.

Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, etc.

- (1) Slaughter-houses.—Registered 3, Licensed 2. Total 5.
Length of time for which Licences are granted, 12 months.
- (2) Notices under Section 8 of the Regulations :—
 - (a) The person appointed to receive these notices :—
Mr. Frank R. Stoker, the Sanitary Inspector.
 - (b) Number of slaughterhouses occupied :—
Slaughtering at a fixed time, 5.
Not giving such notice, one.
Number of notices under Section 9, nil.

(3) The Sanitary Inspector does not hold a special Meat Certificate.

(4) Meat condemned, seized or surrendered, nil.

In last year's Report I stated that one slaughterhouse was "small, delapidated, and quite unsuitable." This had been abandoned, and a building conforming with modern requirements erected to replace it on a different site. One new slaughterhouse has been licenced at Withypool. It is small, but will only be used occasionally.

All the butchers' shops have glass fronts. All are clean and in good order, as are the slaughterhouses. All the meat inspected was invariably sound and of good quality.

Form 572.—Factories, Workshops, and Work-places.

(1)	(2)	(3)	
Premises.	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Prosecutions.
Factories	12	Nil	Nil
Workshops and			
Workplaces	40	Nil	Nil
Defects found, nil.			

No complaints were received from the Factory Inspectors.

Disinfection.—There is a disinfectant at the local Workhouse, which is available when required.

House and Room disinfection is done by Formalin spraying, and is carried out under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector.

(8). PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

The Council's officials are :—One wholetime Sanitary Inspector, who is also the Surveyor, and one part-time Medical Officer of Health. The Council have no health visitors and special nurses.

(9) HOUSING.—A resumé for the past 5 years, including 1925, is :—

	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
Number of new houses erected during the year :—					
(a) Total	20	7	8	4	15
(b) Municipal	—	—	—	—	10
1 Unfit dwelling houses :—					
(1) Dwelling houses inspected	65	57	62	55	120
(2) Under “ Inspection of Districts Regulations of 1910 ”	31	17	21	16	50
(3) Number “ unfit ”	—	1	—	—	—
(4) Number not reasonably fit	3	5	3	—	6
2 Defects remedied without formal notices	9	7	5	6	6
3. Action under the Housing Acts of 1919 :—					
A (1), (2) and (3)	—	—	—	—	—
B Under the Public Health Acts :—					
(a) Number in respect of which notices were served	5	3	—	—	—
(b) Defects remedied :—					
By owner	9	2	—	1	—
Local Authority	—	—	—	—	—
C Representations for closing orders	—	—	—	—	—
(2) Closing orders	—	—	—	—	—
(3) and (4)	—	—	—	—	—
Voluntarily closed by owner	2	1	—	—	—

In the 1919 and 1920 reports are some particulars of the housing requirements of which a short resumé is :—

The total number of houses was given as 1,180, of which about 900 were let at under a £16 rental. The population was then 4,348, or 3.7 persons per house. In 1921 the figures were :—Population 4,514, houses 1,170, making 3.9 per house. This rise in density was to have been expected considering the increase of births over deaths.

In 1920 the shortage of houses was stated to have been not marked, with overcrowding estimated at under half per cent. of the cottages, which overcrowding was ascribed to shortage of houses.

As to fitness, outside the Dulverton Ward, the cottages were described as mostly old, but generally wind and water tight. Many were stated to have damp floors, too small windows, unsatisfactory bedroom ventilation, and poor food storage accommodation.

In that year the "Housing Officer" inspected 600 houses, noted 16 as unfit and 88 as defective, of which 12 were rendered fit by the order of the Local Authority.

It was suggested that the number of new houses required was:—Dulverton 10, Brushford and Brompton 6 each, Upton and Exford 4 each, and Skilgate, Winsford, Withypool and Hawkridge 2 each. Total 38.

Since then 54 new houses have been erected, and 33 remedied; apparently by the owners.



